

# WITHIN TENSIONS



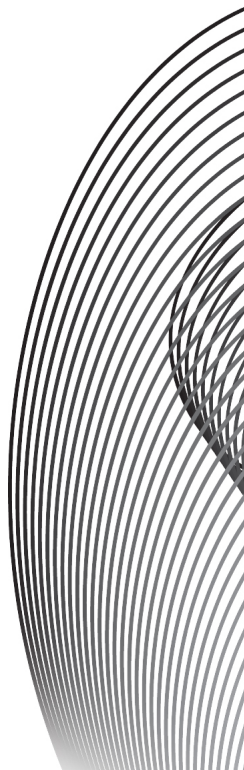
vol.12

FAITH





WITHINTENSIONS





# WITHINTENSIONS

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FAITH



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We at Withintensions want to acknowledge that our work takes place on the unceded territories of the Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), xwməθkwəy̓əm (Musqueam), and Səlilwətał (Tseil-Waututh) peoples. We want to recognize that these lands belong to the Indigenous peoples who have lived here far before the arrival of settlers. We also want to push beyond land acknowledgements to further encourage acts of reconciliation. Recognition is great but it is nowhere near where we need to be. Reconciliation is comprehensive and takes more than an acknowledgment for occupying land. We always support marginalised peoples right to protest.



Alex Tedlie-Stursberg, *Vessel 1* (2018)

## Vessel 1, 2, and 4 (2018)

Concrete/Bottlecaps

Alex Tedlie-Stursberg

Sculptural forms inspired by grottos found in backyards and various spiritual sites meant to house holy objects. In these works the grottos are without a holy object and instead give prominence to embedded found bottle caps



Alex Tedlie-Stursberg, *Vessel 2* (2018)

as the objects of focus. While grottos can centre around worship and ritual, here another ritual is considered: the act of drinking.



Alex Tedlie-Stursberg, *Vesse/ 4* (2018)

## Finding my Fabiola

Francisco Berlanga

For me, faith has always been about unknowing: it can only be had in something that can't be proven. It is a belief that is explicitly not fact and that will never be.

A work that truly uses and exemplifies how faith is formed is Francis Alÿs's *Fabiola* (2008). In this work Alÿs collected hundreds of portraits of Saint Fabiola that are all based on the same icon. All the images are clearly reproductions of the same painting, however, the original has been lost to time. In the vastness of the collection of icons, no single one is dominant and, through the collection, a common likeness of the original portrait reveals itself. In this work, Alÿs enacts a logic of faith in order to present Fabiola. We are shown the original image through the commonality in each reproduction; we are still able to imagine what the original icon would look like despite being unable to ever see it.



The original is unknowable but is still revealed to us. I often use this approach in my own practice. When I find myself facing an unknown topic or a concept that is not accessible to me, I try and find it in the scraps of representation that I have already encountered. When I approach my relationship with Mexico, I have learned to not look for an easy to comprehend big picture understanding that I will never have. Rather, I look to small moments, little exposures to culture that I can piece together. In each additional moment, I get an image that is a little less hazy. I can almost see it clearly but, still, it is just out of reach. I will never be able to create a perfect understanding of Mexico but I have faith that, through my small intentional actions, I can hopefully have an authentic understanding that at least contributes to the greater image.

## Holy Slab (2018)

Bronze/Incense

Alex Tedlie-Stursberg

This sculpture is produced from found beach styrofoam, recast in bronze, and activated with incense. Presented as a holy relic, or quasi-spiritual object, and eternalized through metal, this work revels in what the created have created... ie. waste.





# Faith

Jesse Del Fierro

I once told a mentor  
That I have stopped hoping  
Knowing that it was better not to hope  
Than it was to deal with the disappointment

They said  
Hope is unreliable  
It doesn't do anything  
Hope is waiting for the right thing to happen  
Hope is waiting for the world to happen to you

Faith

Faith is knowing something will happen  
with or without you  
It is Inevitable

Unlike hope  
Faith requires a complete trust  
Unlike hope  
Faith is confident

Unlike hope  
Which can be lost and found  
Faith can be tested  
broken  
And it must be rebuilt

Don't get me wrong

Hope exists in the ways faith cannot  
Where faith is blind  
Hope asks you to hold onto the idea that maybe  
Despite your lack of faith  
Despite being proven wrong time and time again  
Maybe  
Just maybe  
Things may get better

Hope is for when you can't do anything else

Faith is for when you lose hope but still have shit to do

So I suggest you better get started

## Brazen Sea (2016)

Rocks, Pennies, Vinegar, Fountain Pump, Found Shelf, Toy Bulls.

Alex Tedlie-Stursberg

This work makes reference to the Molten Sea, a large-scale bronze fountain held up by bronze bulls, found at Solomon's Temple, where priests would go to wash themselves of their sins.



A self eroding artwork, this sculptural fountain uses vinegar to break down copper coins, ultimately coating itself in their discharge, while eating wishes, or perhaps even sins.



# A Path Less Travelled

Opal Mclean

I had to start living my life a different way.

I spent so long running until my legs gave out only to feel bad when I hit the floor. I'd spend some time sitting there, wondering how the hell I even got here. When did life become a constant sprint? When did I start running and where am I even going? It was my flight response kicking in. I was so afraid of never getting there that I let myself hit the ground 100 times instead of watching my step. I let myself fall to the ground and, sometimes, I feared I would never get up. I feared that I wouldn't have the faith to go on anymore.

It was that faith that picked me back up. I could say it was myself but the voice that told me I was never getting up sounded a lot like my own. I was more used to listening to that negative voice than I was listening to my own faith. The faith I had that life was worth something more than I could know. The faith that made me feel calm when everything around me was falling apart. It



was this feeling that made me take another step forward when all I want to do is stop. It may not speak as loud as the negativity but it was ten times as persistent. It didn't waiver like that voice I had grown to call my own.

My faith knows what is best for me. It was like seeing where I'm going for the first time. I had to learn to listen to that rather than the voice that keeps me from getting off the ground. I might not be able to see the end but I knew that I could get there. My faith told me that's where I was supposed to be going. I had faith that, even if I did not get where I wanted, I would get somewhere. Somewhere worth settling down and planting myself in the ground. By then, it isn't faith that drove me to this place. Faith let me see the path while I was walking it rather than the destination I was trying so hard to rush toward.

The journey would not have been as sweet without faith by my side.

## Cosmic Egg (2017)

Bronze/Incense

Alex Tedlie-Stursberg

This sculpture is produced from found beach styrofoam, recast in bronze, and activated with incense. Presented as a holy relic, or quasi-spiritual object, and eternalized through metal, this work revels in what the created have created... ie. waste.





# Schrödinger's Seed Shall Sprout

Natalie Chan

There's an absurdity in believing that something can be both dead and alive at the same time. Of course, Schrödinger's cat famously brings this notion into question; I wondered then, too, if my faith may be in this state.

I sometimes find myself staring bleakly into unknown futures, unsure of what is to come. I fluctuate between despairing over my lack of results and reassuring myself that the seeds we sow take time to grow. I can look back at past seeds that have flourished into fruitful plants despite all hardships, yet therein still somehow lies room for doubt. Each time there seems to be a new cat in another box, a new seed covered by the soil, unbeknownst to me whether death has taken hold or if life prevails.

If faith is so certain, why is there still room for doubt to take root?

Do I not have faith? Is my idea of faith skewed?

There is a nihilistic nagging that sometimes plagues me: that even if I have been blessed with opportunity, with the connections to my community, with being equipped with knowledge and skills, all my efforts will not be enough anyways. If I plant a seed and tend to it with the utmost care, yet a crow swoops in to consume it,

how could my faith have factored in such an event? On the contrary, how can a sprout be coaxed out with little more than just rainclouds and sunshine? Nevertheless, I cannot bury it into the ground and declare its premature death, nor can I just hope for sudden growth.

Clarity, simply, can be found in adjusting perspectives.

I can be certain of my faith, despite all doubts. Having faith does not necessarily play out the way you imagine; there is always room for disappointment and real losses because I can never be sure if the outcome may be what I hope it to be, but I declare my faith alive because there is power over death, because the state of my Schrödinger's seed can be both dead and alive - my faith holds fast onto the certainty that there is always the possibility of life.

Faith enables me to act out in boldness, to make moves that can defy rationality, to take risk through all uncertainty.

Faith keeps me alive and prompts me to make these decisions; though faith without work may be presumably dead, it is also not the work itself that accounts for successful results but the belief that carries that momentum forward.

I know I am alive,  
that my art can be brought to life.  
It lies both dead and alive in me,  
I will bring it forth and unveil its existence.

## Log Lump (Utopian Lump Redux) (2019)

Found Styrofoam, Expanding Foam, Plaster, Rock  
Spray, Found Pallet, Castors

Alex Tedlie-Stursberg

This work explores a different type of faith, or belief system, in this case ideology. Materials for this work were collected from Sointula, a failed socialist utopian society

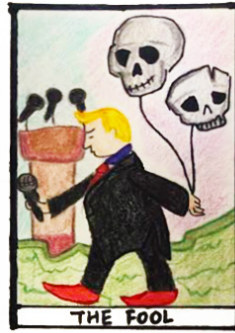
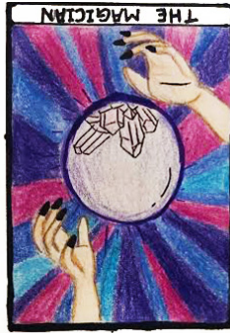


where today one can encounter much evidence of long term industrial interaction with the coastal environment

Composed of found beach styrofoam amalgamated into a sculptural mass and encased in a faux-rock finish, this work attempts to demonstrate how ideological belief systems can result in failure, and ultimately libertarian neglect for environmental stewardship. This condition might be best displayed through a hidden lump of beach garbage.



# Tarot (2020) Sarah U



Tarot is a place to find comfort and purpose when everything else seems lost. But, just when you think you have got it all figured out, the patterns start to change, the wind starts to blow the other way, and everything is back to the way it is - chaos. What gets us to the end? Is it faith, is it good timing, or is it just pure luck and blind hope that things will work out?



# Little cuts, little feelings

Lil Waldegger

Inclined to melancholy,

The pursuit for where every cut and breath comes from  
might give you the isolation you seek.

(zenith)

The ricochets you create defy imagination,  
But there aren't enough shades and hues in the world to  
break the spell.

The midnight you were in was so much more contagious  
to  
you.

Will you fight for the duration?  
A contradicting asphyxiation.

Fixated to elation with an undisclosed map for your  
chaos.  
Everyone who feels it falls in love and drowns.

Francisco  
Berlanga



## Meet the Team

We write with intention & dwell within tensions. We are artists who have been left without an aim for how to continue engaging with art in the absence of institution. Our goal is to provide a place where we can write about new ideas, old ideas, and bad ideas. We are by no means professional writers, we inhabit a place between the seriousness of academic writing and the frivolity of passing thought. We will often succumb to clichés and trends as they pass us as we all often must.

We hope to present unique thoughts for you to consider. Our writing speaks for no one but ourselves. We do not reduce the similar experiences of others to what we have experienced. We invite you to critically engage with the content, to challenge and be challenged, to test the tensions in question.

Francisco Berlanga is a contemporary artist who studied at Simon Fraser University. He obtained his BFA in Visual Arts with a minor in Interactive Arts and Technology. His practice is based on questioning identity, particularly his connection with his own Mexican culture and how one can inhabit a culture while being partially absent from it. He engages in discourses with his own identity through the creation of traditional Mexican “manualidades” or crafts, his work makes connections between traditional Mexican aesthetics and contemporary visual language. His practice engages with concepts of inaccessibility and the role memory and language can play when someone is distanced from their own culture. He attempts to bridge the gaps between his personal and cultural identities by forcing connections between them and by trying to understand the limitations that these identities impose upon each other.



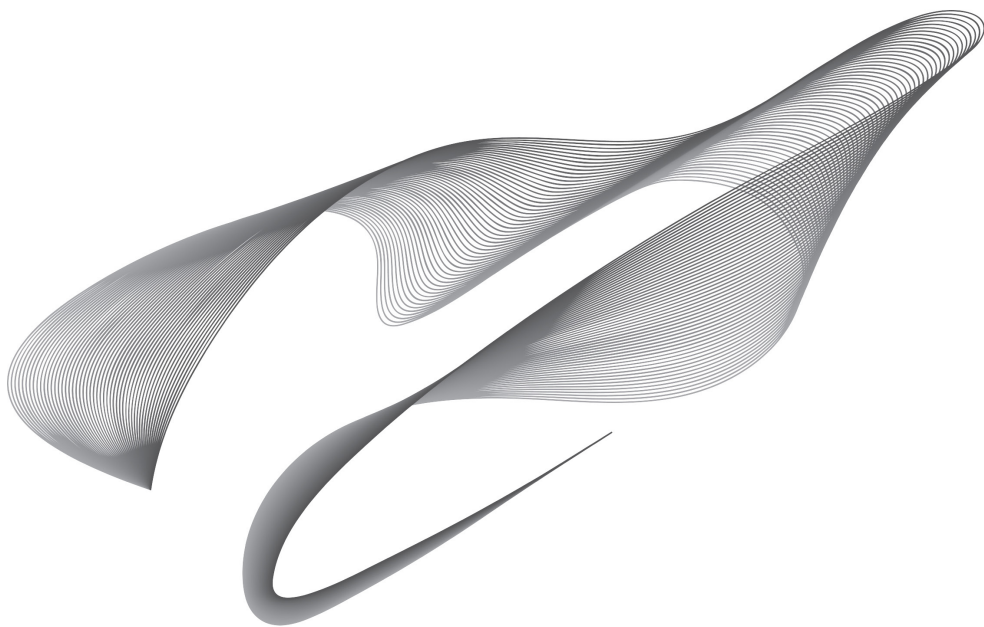
Natalie  
Chan

Natalie Chan recently completed her BFA in Visual Arts at Simon Fraser University. Her practice often focuses on the relational aspects of people & places, as well as the inner turmoils & complexities of the human condition. In the creation of her works, she aims to highlight the ideas of reflection, healing, and reconciliation as tangible possibilities in each encounter. Her latest interests include learning how to tattoo, in understanding both the technical skills & intimate relation between artist and the livelihood of their canvas.



Opal  
Mclean

Mclean is best described as the “selfish artist” meaning her practice entirely revolves around herself. Her work often relates back to a mental psyche that cannot be described by words alone. Instead, it can be described by an action. A reference to a state of being or a performance that lends to the way her brain functions. This manifestation and documentation of different processes becomes her tool to relate to the outside world. Her own existence comes into question in a way that so many experience in their own daily life. This experience becomes a social, cultural, and political connection to her projects. Her work becomes both alienating but connecting in a shared experience that translates through different media.



We put out new issues every month with a different topic.

We are always looking for submissions and opportunities to collaborate so check out our social medias.

on instagram:  
@withintensions

or email us at:  
within.tensions@gmail.com

If you want more information, feel free to contact us.

Our next issue will be on the topic of “Chance” and submissions are now open.

See you next month!

## Acknowledgements

Withintensions would not have been possible without the works of Francisco Berlanga, Natalie Chan, Jesse Del Fierro, Opal Mclean, Alex Tedlie-Stursberg, Sarah U, and Lil Waldegger

We would also like to thank Francisco Berlanga for his design and social media contributions, Natalie Chan for her assistance in coordinating and Opal Mclean for her editorial work.

We are excited to share our future works with you and we hope to provide more opportunities for artists alike.

